



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing -- March 9, 2009
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environmental Protection

Raised House Bill No. 6553 - AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised House Bill No. 6553 AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING. The Department strongly supports bowhunting on Sunday as a game management measure for white-tailed deer on private land in deer management zones as determined by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

Sunday hunting is an important and proven management measure in 42 states and can help the Department achieve deer management objectives in areas of the State where population densities of this species are very high or increasing.

High densities of deer are causing extensive damage to ecosystems and property in certain parts of Connecticut. The addition of Sundays during the private land deer seasons would significantly increase deer harvest rates in these zones by increasing hunter opportunity. Because most deer hunters work during the week, far more deer are taken on Saturdays than on weekdays. The Department anticipates that harvest rates on Sundays would be similar to those observed on Saturdays.

The Department agrees that specific written landowner permission should be required of Sunday hunters. This requirement would allow private landowners to determine where Sunday hunting can occur. Certainly, other activities occur on private land, but these activities already occur concurrently with bow hunting the other six days of the week without incident. Bow hunting is extremely safe. Since the passage of the Deer Management Act in 1974, not a single nonhunter has been injured by a bowhunter during millions of hunter-days afield.

Thank you for the opportunity to the present the Department's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, Legislative Liaison, at 424-3401.